

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
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R 101105Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7777
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN
USICA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 3054

DEPT PASS OAU COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, OAU, CN, SU
SUBJECT: OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, DAY II: COMORO ISLANDS
DELEGATION EXPELLED

REF: (A) KHARTOUM 3043 (B) KHARTOUM 3046

SUMMARY: IN POLITICAL DECISION WHICH COULD AFFECT LEGALITY
OF FUTURE DELEGATIONS TO OAU MEETINGS, 31ST COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS (COM) HAS EXPELLED DELEGATION FROM COMORO ISLANDS.
WHILE DECISION WAS QUICKLY APPROVED BY COM, ISSUE MAY ARISE
AGAIN DURING ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT (AHG
OR SUMMIT) BECAUSE OF QUESTIONABLE PROCEDURES USED TO EXPEL
DELEGATION. END SUMMARY

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1. FOLLOWING DIFFICULT MORNING SESSION (REF A) COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS (COM) FINALLY RESUMED NORMAL AGENDA SCHEDULE IN
EVENING. AFTER DECIDING UPON BREAU OF COM (REF B),
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN (PROB) FONMIN REQUESTED THAT
COMORO ISLANDS DELEGATION BE EXPELLED ON GROUNDS THAT IT
WAS BROUGHT TO POWER BY "NOTORIOUS BOB DENARD GANG."
MAIL SECONDED PROB REQUEST. SUPPORT CAME FROM GUINEA,

ALGERIA, LIBYA (ADDING CALL FOR CONDEMNATION OF DENARD AND "ESPECIALLY THOSE BEHIND HIM") AND NIGERIA, WHICH REQUESTED THAT CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE BE ESTABLISHED IMMEDIATELY BY COM TO SCRUTINIZE ANY OTHER QUESTIONABLE CREDENTIALS.

2. WHILE NO MEMBERS ACTUALLY OPPOSED EXPULSION OF COMORO DELEGATION, SOME MEMBERS DID ENTER "RESERVATIONS" BECAUSE OF SUMMARY NATURE OF COM DECISION AND ITS UNWILLINGNESS TO ALLOW COMORO DELEGATION TO SPEAK. IVORY COAST, MAURITANIA AND MAURITIUS TOOK POSITION THAT COMORO DELEGATION SHOULD AT LEAST BE ALLOWED TO EXPLAIN ITSELF, AND HAD COM NOTE THEIR RESERVATIONS. CENTRAL AFRICA EMPIRE, CHAD, SENEGAL AND TUNISIA WANTED IT RECORDED BY COM THAT THEY DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN DEBATE. ZAIRE ABSTAINED. ASG ONU CHARACTERIZED COM DECISION AS UNANIMOUS EVEN THOUGH PERHAPS AS MANY AS 20 MEMBERS EXPRESSED PROCEDURAL RESERVATIONS. SUDAN AS CHAIRMAN OF COM ASKED COMORO DELEGATION TO LEAVE COM AND IT DID.

3. OFFICIAL OAU SPOKESMAN FOR COM, DR. PETER ONU, EXPLAINED THAT EXPULSION OF COMORO DELEGATION WAS NOT AN OAU PRECEDENT, AS FEARED BY TWO DELEGATIONS. ONU ASSERTED THAT OAU REJECTION OF TSHOMBE (ZAIRE) CREDENTIALS IN 1964 AND OBOTE (UGANDA) CREDENTIALS IN 1971 WERE PARALLEL CASES. ONU FURTHER SAID THAT EXPULSION OF COMORO DELEGATION WAS ONLY FOR KHARTOUM

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MEETINGS AND THAT COMORO ISLANDS WOULD REMAIN MEMBER OF OAU.

4. COMMENT: OAU DECISION HAS CAUSED ONLY MILD SURPRISE AND DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE DISTURBED CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS INITIALLY. NIGERIAN REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE VIEWED AS PROPER AND NECESSARY AND COULD SET PRECEDENT FOR FUTURE OAU MEETINGS. COM ACCEPTED AS FACT THAT "NOTORIOUS" MERCENARY BOB DENARD WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR RECENT (MAY 1978) COUP IN COMOROS AND FOR THIS REASON ACHIEVED SUPERFICIAL UNANIMITY IN EXPELLING DELEGATION, DESPITE "RADICAL" SPONSORSHIP OF RESOLUTION.

5. OAU HAS TAKEN POLITICAL DECISION RATHER THAN LEGAL ONE IN EXPELLING COMORO DELEGATION AND MAY FIND ITSELF IN DIFFICULT POSITION IN FUTURE TO DETERMINE IN LEGAL TERMS, WHAT IS ACCEPTABLY CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT IN AFRICAN CONTEXT. IT APPEARS NOTORIETY OF DENARD AND HIS ROLE IN COMOROS COUP ARE REASON FOR OAU EXPULSION OF DELEGATION, BUT ISSUE MAY ARISE AGAIN DURING HEADS OF STATE SUMMIT (AHG).

6. MAURITANIAN FONMIN MOUKNASS SAID THAT SENEGAL WAS PREPARING CASE FOR PRESENTATION TO AHG WHICH COULD HAVE

DEGREE OF MODERATE SUPPORT. MOUKNASS CLAIMED THAT MODERATES WERE NOT PREPARED FOR EXPULSION OF COMORO DELEGATION AND FELT AT A LOSS WHEN COMOROS DID NOT SPEAK UP TO DEFEND THEMSELVES. ACCORDING TO MOUKNASS, THIS MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR MODERATES TO DEFEND POLITICALLY EMBARRASSING COMOROS, IN SPITE OF FACT DELEGATION REPRESENTS ONLY GOVERNMENT OF ISLANDS.
BERGUS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED OAU COLLECTIVE.

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